FSN Network Agriculture Task Force Meeting December 18, 2012

Attendance: Andrea Mottram, TOPS; Tom Cole, Consultant; Tom Remington, CRS; Catherine Craig; Paul Sommers, Consultant; Sam Goff, Food for the Hungry; Adam Reinhart, FFP; Rupert Best, CRS; Melissa Teuber, TOPS

* Updates
	+ FSN Network meeting, Washington DC Nov 2012
		- There were 4 agriculture sessions
			* 2 agriculture and nutrition sessions
			* 1 market development session
			* 1 seed systems session
		- There was positive feedback and discussion
	+ Planning for a FSN Network meeting in Bangladesh 2013
		- The dates are not confirmed, but should be around late April
		- This will include a training element for implementing staff
	+ Representation at the CORE meeting in Washington DC
	+ Representation at the Spring N-Glee meeting in Uganda
		- This meeting was attended by mission staff, African foreign nationals, US based staff, BFS, contractors and other implementers
		- The purpose of the meeting was to help agriculturists be aware of using agriculture to help nutritional outcomes
		- There is a dilemma in the fact that the USAID missions are applying the FtF value chain approach
			* This focuses on 1 crop, which could be at the detriment of mix cropping and diversifying.
	+ Work on tools and defining training plans
* Training plans
	+ Field-based
		- Three, 4-day training sessions potentially Bangladesh, Guatemala and Niger/Uganda.
			* The Bangladesh training will tie into the FSN Network Knowledge Sharing event
			* The other countries were chosen as they have program start-ups
			* Each training is regional
			* Focus: key essential ANRM elements (core competencies) and how they inter-relate from a management perspective.
		- Four, 2-day training sessions selected from countries with on-going development food assistance programs.
			* These trainings could be done in different languages
			* These trainings will be more country focused
			* These trainings will go into more detail about specific technical elements of the core competencies and will link with tools
			* Focus: technical detail on specific topics within core competencies (e.g. market analysis, understanding and overcoming barriers to technology uptake).
	+ US-based
		- One, 3-day training session in DC.
			* This training will be for the technical HQ backstop staff
				+ It will expose them to technical areas within the core competencies and link them with the training that is being done in the field
			* Focus: An abridged version of the 4-day field training.
		- Three, 1-day discussion workshops.
			* These can be done online in the fsnnetwork.org space for the agriculture task force
				+ Another possibility is to have them in person in DC.
			* Focus: Specific technical area development.
				+ This could start the discussion about setting minimum standards for what is a farmer field school or conservation agriculture
	+ Every training will be demand driven
		- COPs will be contacted for field trainings
		- Input by the task force will be asked for both types of trainings
			* Input can be given on the task force section of fsnnetwork.org
		- Discussion forums will have a bit more HQ input
		- There will be a balance between the demands expressed and including training regarding specific core competencies
	+ The focus of each training will be on what implementers are struggling with in their day-to-day work
		- One possible example includes practical ways of using ICT and mobile technology
		- Another possible example is to have those studying seed systems to discuss the stumbling blocks and tools that can be used to overcome them
		- Each training will end with next steps, so it is more than just a discussion
			* TOPS hopes to move forward on some of these issues
		- Specific crops can be used as case studies or examples, but will most likely not be the main focus of trainings
			* Crops used can be adapted to the setting as appropriate
	+ Trainings will most likely start after April.
	+ Locations of trainings can be narrowed down in discussions and emails
	+ Trainings will be geared towards program managers and technical program staff.
* Initial focus on specific technical areas:
	+ As the core competencies cover a broad number of areas, we need to prioritize the focus for tools and trainings
	+ Market Development
		- Andrea Mottram is the point person
		- Includes market analysis, value chain development, farming as a business, and private sector engagement
	+ Agro-ecology
		- Tom Cole is the point person
		- Includes IPM, agroforestry, conservation ag, soil/water management, climate change adaptation/mitigation, and drought cycle management
	+ Agriculture and nutrition
		- Paul Sommers is the point person
		- Includes nutrition sensitive value chains, and ag-lead/nutrition-lead and practical applications
	+ Social behavior change in agriculture
		- Sam Goff is the point person
		- Includes links to farmer extension and barriers to change
	+ TOPS hopes to make 5 page technical guides around each area.
		- They will give a summary of the technical area, best practices, and 1-2 top tools that can be used
		- Specific topics can be given a set of minimum standards
		- Information from these guides will be obtained by engaging with others and collating what is already in use
			* The task force will be an integral part to this process
* Agro-enterprise can be looked at through a resilience lens.
	+ Focusing on mono-crops can hurt resilienc if not done correctly
		- It can come at the expense of smaller family farming systems that are built on a diverse cropping system
	+ USAID is only discussing resilience in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa
		- Resilience work can be done in other areas, but the term only applies to these 2 areas given that there are only joint planning cells for resilience in these areas
		- It is incumbent on FFP programs to keep up good work in resilience outside the 2 USAID areas
* The next FSN Network ANRM Task Force meeting will be in mid to late January
	+ Fuze will be used again
	+ Andrea will be sending an email out regarding possible agenda items
* Sam will be sending out an email regarding starting a discussion in the agriculture task force section of fsnnetwork.org
	+ The discussion will be about looking at applying SBC to agriculture programming
		- The focus in the past has been mainly on SBC and nutrition